A

DIALOGUE

OR

DISCOVRSE

betweene a

Parliament-man

And a

Roman-Catholick,

Touching

The preſent ſtate of Recuſants in ENGLAND.

And ſhewing how from time to time they have alwaies Maintained their Religion by Treaſon and Conſpiracies.

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A Dialogue or Discourse betweene a Parliament-man and a Roman Catholick.

Catholicke.

SIR, What are your Senators resolved to ruine all Catholickes?

Prost. We shall proceede against you accordingt o the Lawes.

Cath. But the Lawes sometimes may be suspended: for when the cause and motive of the Law doth universally cease, the Law it selfe may be anulled.

Prot. True: but not in our case; for the motives, which heretofore induced our Parliaments to enact Statutes against Recusants, doe still continue, neither are they as yet universally ceased. Therefore the neglect of putting them in execution is both offencive to God, and dangerous to our State.

Cath. Yet I cannot see, why the suspention of a rigorous hand, and a charitable moderation of your illimited power over a small number of poore Catholickes can breede a scruple in your Conscience, or bee offencive to Almighty God, for although in your opinion the Religion of Catholicks be false, and consequently, that your zeale to the Truth doe urge you to suffer no miscreants among you: yet this zeale being onely grounded upon the literall text of the Scripture, interpreted by your selves, how can you thinke that the explication of this sacred authority is so evident, as that hee may justly bee punished, who will not adheare to your opinion. But however, may you not in sure charity without offence to God suffer us to live amongst you, with intention to bring us to the knowledge of what

you deeme to be truth, and so with intention to make us of your Religion: This you see is the practise of other Nations, both Catholickes and Protestants to admit and to tolerate among them such as professe a different beliefe from theirs: It is so you know in France, Spaine, Germany, Swevia, Polonia, Muscovia, Turkey, Persia, &c. will you onely be more scrupulous, then all the Christians of Europe, and more severe to your own Countrymen, then Turkes, and other Heathen Princes?

Prot. Could I bee perswaded that such a connivence at Recusants were not hurtfull to our present governement, and that the Roman Catholik could be true and loyall subjects to a Protestant King or Common wealth, I would never give my voyce to have them used with rigour and severity, but you Papists are much pernitious to our State. Therefore it is not your Religion, but Treason that we punish.

Cath I confesse this severity sprung not onely from the motives of State, and Policie, but was much exasperated by the rigorus proceedings of the Court of Rome, and by the factious combinations, and seditious plots of some few busie bout feux of the Roman faith. Yet I am confident, that our Religion doth not teach us any thing contrary to the fidelity we owe to our King and Country, though Protestants, yea even though they persecute us.

Prot. But I can tell you, that the vast ambition of the Court of Rome, their continuall practises & endeavours to conserve & augment their greatnesse, and the Popes primacy, & pretended authority to create and depose Kings and Emperours were able to make us Iealous of you, but I will onely speake of the speciall power, which your generally give him over Hereticall and Schismaticall States and Princes, as our State and King is in your opinion.

Cath. In this many wise and experienced Catholickes doe blame the ambition of the Court of Rome as well as you. And as for the Popes power of creating Kings, there is now no Prince will either expect or desire creation from him.

Prot. How ever you see, that our case is different from the

case

case of Catholicke Princes, for you say, that the Pope can depose Kings for Heresie, or Schisme: (and this is a generall tenent amongst you) or for joyning in league, and alliance with Protestant States, nay for notorious vices: and some of you adde even for insufficiency; and in all these cases the Pope himselfe must be judge. And what Protestant Prince can be secure, supposing this doctrine be true, and that the Popes party, either forraigne, or domesticall, be stronger, then such a Princes? Do you not hold that the Pope can absolve the subjects of such a King from their allegiance? and hath he not done it here in *England*? Did not his *Nuncio* in *Spaine* solicite for many yeares together, to have an Armado sent against this Kingdome. And was not this effected at the instance, and pursuit of your English Iesuites, did not *Cardinall Allen* write, and print a seditious letter by the Popes command, to stirre up the Papists of England to rebellion? Was not Queene *Elizabeth* excommunicated, and deposed by the Pope? Did not *Dolman* write a Book by the Popes order, to disprove Queen *Elizab.* Title to the crown, and to transferre it upon *Portugall*? These are your tenents, and your practises must needs follow upon all occasions; which if sometimes they do not, it is not for want of Principles to make them good in your conceit, but for want of power to put them in execution: and therefore we conclude, that both the Pope and you, do but expect a fit oppertunity to blow up both our King and Parliament, and set up your Religion.

Cath. Those authors, which you seeme most to point at, too too much favouring the Popes authority in temporall affaires, have beene deservedly condemned by our Catholicke Universities, and their bookes publiquely burned by the order of Catholicke Magistrates. And for my part I shall not thinke him innocent, or a worthy member of this Common-wealth, that will not acknowledge his faithfull loyalty, and constant allegiance to our King, and countrey, though Protestants; independent of all forraigne, or papall authority.

Prot. Why doe you not then at the least take the Oath of allegiance? Though perhaps for the oath of supremacy, there may be some more difficultie in it.

Cath.

Cath. Sir, if you onely intend to be secured of our allegiance, we shall easily agree, but to make us decide a question disputable in Schooles by swearing an universall negative, to what effect I pray? For although in my opinion the Pope cannot depose any absolute Prince, though an Hereticke, no not in any case of his owne power, or by any authority inherent in his person or dignity; nor doe I thinke, that any indifferent man will say, that the Pope can depose King *Charles*, that now raigneth, much lesse that he can absolve his Catholike Subjects, from their allegiance due unto him. Wherefore as wise States-men you ought not to make us sweare to this, or that universall tenent in points proble, matically disputed by Divines: but to secure your selves of our particular allegiances and fidelity to our King, and Countrey, which you may justly exact of us, and we as justly performe. And for the Oath of Supremacy 'tis a meere folly to imagine, that any secular, or Lay-men can be supreame of the Church: None of your selves beleive it, nor any Christian Religion, or sect did ever before *Henry* 8. Professe such a tenent, and Master *Calvin* in his relation, *de Valentiniano*, *Theodosio*, and Saint *Ambrosio*, strongly opposing this fond assection calls them, who first gave this title to *Henry* 8. *Homines inconsiderati* and concludes, *erunt enim Blasphemi, cùm vocarent ipsum, summum Ecclesiæ caput sub Christo.*

Prot. I could wish all the Papists of *England* were of your opinion in the point of disposition, it would then perhaps be better for them; but the contrary doctrine is more generall amongst you, and thence doe follow most dangerous sequels, and sometimes most enormous effects: your Divines tell you, that 'tis lawfull for any Catholicks Subject, to take armes against his Prince, if he be either an Hereticke, or an open persecutor of the Roman Church: nay, that it is no sinne to kill him either by private treachery, or publique assaults: and of this we have seene in our age divers lamentable examples practised abroad, and some most execrable attempts here at home.

Cath. Truly Sir, your Divines, as *Luther*, *Calvin*, and others are more forward in this point, then any Catholicke I know;

and their practises have farre exceeded ours; except perhaps the Powder-Treason: but that was Diabolicall beyond measure.

Prot. Well, you will never wash off the infamy of that powder-plot; you know what proofes were brought in against your Iesuites before the Lords Commissioners at that time.

Cath. Sir, you know I am neither Priest, nor Iesuite: and I thinke there is never a Catholicke Gentleman in *England*, but doth abhorre and detest that wicked conspiracy, as much as any Protestant of you all. And sure King *Iames* knew well, that this monster was hatched in the breast of some particular Catholickes; See his Proclamation *November.7.* His wordes are these: We are by good experience so well perswaded of the loyaltie of divers of our Subjects of the Roman religion, that they doe as much abhorre this detestable conspiracy, as we our selves.

Prot. But I could object more disloyalties, if the time would permit, then you can answere too: and the root thereof spring from your seminary Priests, who by their power, and authority have a maine sway over your consciences, and under pretence of Religion can bend your passions to their owne endes, and designes.

Cath. Sir, I confesse some thinges may be objected in that kind worthy the reflection of a good common-wealths man: but if you be pleased to use your clemency towards your poore Catholicke Subjects, and graciously to conceive at their subsistance: you shall finde them ready to conspire with none, nor aime at their owne temporall good, but by the advancement of your common-wealth, whereof if once you vouchsafe to admit them as worthy members, the Popes power shall no way hinder their obedience to his Majesty and you.

Prot. I could wish your Priests would do so too, but I see not how we can expect such loyalty at their hands, and therefore you see his Majesty hath proclaimed their banishment. And surely if we had suffered the Popes agent to continue here, he would have had a care of his Masters interests without doubt.

Cath. Sir, how fit it may be to suffer an Agent from the Pope in a State generally Protestant, intermixed with some Catholicks, I will not dispute, but for the banishing of our Priests, meerely for exercising their function, tis in vaine; you may hang them at your pleasure, but as long as there remaines a Catholicke in *England* there will be Priests, because we beleeve, that we have an essentiall dependance, and necessity of Priests. And therefore Priests will venture their lives for the salvation of our Soules: 'Tis, and ever hath beene the spirit of our Church and Religion, when all comes to all, you will finde that a moderate hand over us, is more Christian, more humaine, and more politick.

Prot. Sir, If you could finde a way how wee might bee secured of the fidelity of your Priests, and that their dependance of Rome, and affection to forraigne States, were not obnoctious and liable to our just suspitions, I could bee content Recusants lived amongst us, in a civill intelligence, and ordinary friendship. But you see wee are so zealous of them, that we have rather permitted strangers & forraign Priests to reside in his Majesties Chappell, though with no little danger; for 'tis a wonder, that the more zealous sort of our people have not made some tummults, and uproares, seeing the Chappell so frequented, as it was: and you know we cannot bee so secured of any strangers fidelity to our Countrey, especially if they be Priests, and of a different Religion, and daily frequent both Court and Towne, being imboldned in that they are not liable to our Lawes; for besides their zeale to Religion, they are naturally inclined to give notice of what they heare, and favour in what they can, their owne Countries interests.

Cath. Truly sir I doubt not but I can clearely show you, how you may be secured of the loyally of some of our English Priest, and how their dependance of Rome may bee of that nature, as shall give you no just occasion of suspition, and therefore might bee admitted upon those termes and conditions, as would banish all suspition, and prevent all dangers. As for her Majesties Chappell, trie the Articles of her marriage, agreed upon betwixe the two States, ratified under the broad Seale of each Kingdome, & it would be against the Law of Nations, and unworthy the fidelity of a Christian Prince to

infringe, and violate such a publique contract, alas Sir, consider that now whilest you happily are sitting at the sterne of the Common-wealth, and piously endeavouring to reforme the corruptions, and abuses of our Courts, and government, as also respectively seeking to vindicate the ancient liberty of our Countrey, shall we only your poore Catholicke Subjects be excluded from this generall Iubilee; take then some moderate course to secure your selves of our allegiance: and let us all conspire to make one Civill Body, that joyned, and united both in your domesticke interests, and in your forraigne leagues and warres we may (as your Catholicke Allies doe) engage our selves as willingly, and as farre as you, Did not King *James* say well; a too severe persecution makes men desperate? *Non coercet, sed provocat violentia.* Clemency begets love, love breeds loyalty.

Prot. If these your tenents were common to all Papists, I conceive you would finde us more indulgent. Therefore me thinkes it were worthy your labour to draw such a Proclamation of your fidelity, as you thinke Papists might lawfully take, and as would perhaps content our Parliament.

Cath. Sir, I framed the last Winter p ivately to my selfe a short petition in the behalfe of Catholickes, and have since added thereunto such a Protestation as you speake of; here they are peruse them I pray, and if you thinke fit, make your mederate friends pertakers of them, whom if they satisfie, I shall be heartily glad, if nothing will serve but our totall ruine, Gods will be done, at least it will be a comfort to have given this testimony of our allegiance, and fidelity; so that if we perish, it must needs be for our religion, since the past crimes of some few, and the disputable opinions of others can never be a legall warrant to condemne the innocent: the next time we meete, you will tell me more, in the interim God be with you.

FINIS.